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EXECUTED WITH NEATNESS AND DESPATCH.

POPULAR TALES.

HENRY AND CHARLES;

OR, HONESTY AND DISHONESTY.

BY D. C. COLESWORTHY.

O, dark and fearful is the path
That leads to ruin;
No blossoming flowers to live in bath—
No green grass spreads the way.

He is a brother and a friend,
Who when our lot is low,
With pleasant words, will aid and extend,
And wipe the tears that flow.

"Be a good boy, Henry. You are now fourteen years old, and I have made arrangements with Mr. Simonton to take you into his store. Be obedient to your master: in all things just and reasonable. I have confidence in him, or I would not consent for you to go from home. He will be kind to you and always treat you well, if you do your duty. Be perfectly honest, Henry: never take the value of a copper from your master even if you stand in great need of money. If you do your duty and are faithful to Mr. Simonton you will secure his confidence and the respects of all who know you, and become a useful man. Mind what I tell you—be honest—be industrious—attend strictly to your business, and never associate with the vicious and unprincipled."

"Thus spoke Mr. Jones to his son, who was about leaving the parental roof for a clerkship in a store. Henry was a dutiful child, and had received excellent precepts and good example from his parents."

"I shall try, father," said the boy, "to please Mr. Simonton, and I think he will never have occasion to speak a cross word to me."

"You must do your best to give satisfaction to your master," said his mother. "Remember that you will have to put up with more inconveniences than you would at home, and that you cannot always do as you would desire. Endeavor to be obedient to Mr. Simonton, so that he will never have occasion to reprove you, and so conduct yourself that he will never hesitate to trust you."

With cheerful spirits and a happy heart, the youth left his parents and entered the store of the merchant. Mr. Simonton did an extensive business for the place, and employed another clerk, who was about two years the senior of Henry. His name was Charles Bedford. It was not long before Henry became the companion and friend of Charles—the latter could not help loving the former, he was so gentle and amiable in his disposition. There was a difference in the feelings of the youths. Henry was strict in his adherence to what he considered correct principles. He abhorred deception and profanity, and strictly observed the Sabbath by attending church, as he had been brought up by his parents. But Charles would often evade and equivocate, and sometimes utter falsehoods. When he was displeased he did not hesitate to make use of profane words, and as for the Sabbath, he did not believe in its observance, and would often pass the day in strolling about the streets.

"The boys boarded together with their master. One night as they retired to rest, Charles remarked:

"I don't see why you are so plucky particular about what you do."

"In every respect, Charles?"

"In every thing. You won't stay at home on Sunday, you know, and seem to think it wrong to enjoy yourself on that day. I think as we are confined to the store all the week, there's no harm in enjoying oneself on Sunday."

"But I take more pleasure in attending church than I do in loitering about. In a good sermon I feel considerable interest. I also like good singing. I would not stay away from church on any account."

"And then, Henry, you are so particular to speak just so. I don't know as I ever heard you swear. There is no harm in using a few trifling words."

"But, what good do they do?"

"Oh! one appears better to use them—and then they come in so easy, that I cannot help using them."

"If I cannot appear well without swearing, I shall be contented to appear badly. I know I shall never learn to use profane words."

"You will get over such feelings by and by. You will never be thought any thing of unless you do, and there's another thing, you will not smoke a cigar. What harm is there in smoking, I should like to know?"

"It does no good. I have heard it said that smoking leads to drinking, and that there are few if any drunkards who do not use tobacco in some shape or another. You wouldn't wish to be a drunkard, I hope?"

"No—and I never intend to. I don't exactly like your temperance societies; I wouldn't join one on any account. I like freedom from all restraint."

"I am sorry to hear you talk so. The temperance societies, I believe, are doing a great deal of good."

"You are foolish, Henry, to think so. But you will change your mind before long."

Thus the two youths conversed till they dropped asleep. It was evident that Charles had had a different education from his companion. His parents were of that class who look upon mere morality as a virtue, even though the heart be depraved. If outwardly the man appeared well, it was sufficient—and thus they taught their children.

For a few months Charles and Henry moved on pleasantly together, but a keen observer could have noticed the bad influence that young Bedford exercised over his companion. Being with him constantly, and hearing his conversation and observing his conduct, Henry by degrees learned the disgusting habit of using profane words and was less particular in his observance of the Sabbath. He less frequently called upon his parents and often spent his evenings walking the streets, or in some improper shanty, where the rum glass was freely circulated. His mother saw the alteration in her son, but knew not to what cause to impute it. One evening when he called upon her, she remarked—

"Henry, where is it that you spend your evenings? You have not been at home for more than a week."

"I generally go with Charles Bedford."

"Where do you go?"

"Sometimes to one place, and sometimes to another."

"I am afraid, my son, that Charles is not so good a boy as he ought to be, and that he will lead you astray."

"So you always say, mother, when I go with any body I like."

"But my child, I never speak unless it is for your good. It troubles me to have you away from home every evening."

"You no need to have any fears of me. I shall not go into bad company."

"I have known many a boy to be ruined by bad associates, and fear that boy is not so upright as he ought to be."

"Thus would Henry's mother talk with him. She was apprehensive that he would be led away by Charles and ruined. Her fears were not entirely groundless. Young Bedford was loose and irregular in his habits and had so insinuated himself into the favor of Henry, that the latter did not hesitate to follow his advice and example.

Charles was in the constant practice of using profane words, smoking cigars and spending his evenings among those who did not hesitate occasionally to take a glass of cordial. Henry had learned to swear and smoke, from his companion, and every night he occurred him to his favorite resorts. Once Charles took a glass of wine, and invited his friend to partake with him.

"I should rather not," said he.

"Come—don't be afraid."

"It will not hurt you. Come—come, drink a glass with me."

Stopping a moment to think, he replied—"I will not drink any to-night."

"You are foolish, Henry."

"Yes, he is a devilish fool," remarked the retailer; "but what use is there for me to drink when I do not need it, and have not the least desire for it?"

"Then drink to please your friend, who has so kindly offered it to you."

"Suppose I drink one glass, it may be the ruin of me."

"Who told you that story? John Crockett, I'm bound to say. Let John look at home. He has enough to do to mind his own affairs."

"Who is John Crockett? I don't know him."

"You don't be fearful, my little lad," said one who was lying upon a bench; "don't mind what the temperance folk tell you. What do they care about you or any body else? All they want is power, to rule the State. Then they'll be satisfied. Come, my first fellow," he continued, rising from his seat, and putting Henry on a shoulder; "take one glass, just to please us all."

"Do, Henry, do," said Charles, putting the glass to his lips; "there, drink. That's a fine fellow—I knew you were no fool; he continued, as Henry took one or two swallows.

"I knew that youth was too intelligent," said the retailer, "to listen to the harangues of Dow and Walton. Keep him from their influence, and he will grow up a fine fellow."

After conversing for about an hour in a like strain, cursing the temperance societies and all who addressed their meetings—Henry remained most of the time silent—he and his companions went to their lodgings and retired.

"What's the matter with you?" said Charles, addressing his friend, as he jumped into bed.

"What would my mother say, if she knew how I have conducted? I have tasted of ardent spirits to-night! And the poor boy could not help shedding tears."

"Your mother will never know it—and certainly she would not object to your enjoying yourself, if she did."

"But what will it lead to? Who knows but I may become intemperate?"

"You will be a fool if you do. Can't you now and then take a glass of wine or cordial, without being a drunkard? I put you if you can't."

"The greatest drunkards commenced by one drop. If my mother knew what I had done to-night, she would not rest till I had left this place."

"Your mother is like the rest of the orthodox, always borrowing trouble, and always afraid somebody is going to be ruined."

Without extending the conversation, Henry closed his eyes to sleep—not however, without

resolving in his mind never to go into a grog-shop again.

Early in the morning, as he was passing down the street to his shop, he met the retailer, who told his companion the spirit the night previous.

"Ah, my little fellow," said he, "I was much pleased with you last night, and should be happy to have you call on me again. That Charles Bedford is a capital fellow. Follow his advice, and you'll make something."

Henry made but a word in reply, and entered upon his duties at the shop. All that day he said but a few words, while Charles appeared to be as cheerful as a lark. He felt he had taken a wrong step, and disobeyed a kind mother and he was unhappy.

But, by associating constantly with Charles, the idea that it was wrong to drink a little spirit, occasionally gradually wore away, and he objected less to go into the retailer's shops. With his companion, Henry denounced the temperance people as fanatical, and was as earnest in condemning their course as any of his associates. He now preferred the company of the profane and drinking to the steady and industrious, and often absented himself from church on the Sabbath. So much for the influence and bad example of a companion. His parents noticed the change in their son, and dreaded him to keep aloof from bad associates; but they knew not the extent of his departures from their precepts.

After they had got through with the business of the day, and supper was ended, Charles and Henry went into their chamber, when the latter remarked—

"I have an idea of taking a ride this evening—should you like to go?"

"I don't know but I should. But where can you obtain a horse?"

"Say nothing, and I will tell you. On the floor of the shop, under the money drawer I picked up a two dollar bill."

"It probably belongs to Mr. Simonton."

"How do I know that? I found the money and it is mine. If you will go with me, I will hire a horse and chaise."

After a moment's hesitation, Henry decided to go. That evening, they spent the two dollars. Henry by the request of his companion, handed the bill to Mr. Plummer, the stable keeper to take out his pay for his horse.

Early the next morning, Mr. Simonton took Henry one side, and remarked—

"I have often missed money from my drawer. It is unpleasant for me to accuse any one of dishonesty; more especially one as young as you are, whose integrity I never wish to doubt. But I must say, I have strong suspicions that you are not so honest as you ought to be."

"Sir, I have taken no money from you," said Henry, shedding tears.

"Look here," continued Mr. Simonton, taking a bill from his pocket-book, "did you ever see that before?"

Henry saw it was the very bill he had passed to Mr. Plummer the night before.

"Yes, sir," said he, "I think that is the bill I passed to the stable-keeper last evening."

"It is the very one, and it belonged to me, and you must have taken it from the money drawer."

"It was handed to me by Charles, who said he found it on the floor."

"A likely story. But if it were true, you knew that it belonged to me. But the story I do not believe. Charles has been with me a number of years, and I always found him trustworthy."

"It certainly is as I tell you," said the boy, sobbing aloud.

"You should have wept before. I cannot consent to have a dishonest boy in my employment. I shall directly send you to your father."

"I am not so guilty, sir, as you may suppose, and if you will try me once more, I'll be more careful what I do. I am sorry I consented to go with Charles, and would not do it again for the world."

"I am aware, Henry, if I turn you away—and for dishonesty, too—it will nearly ruin you. Who will trust you again? Where can you get a place?"

"It is this thought that makes me feel so: and I know no other would not sleep if she knew this. If you will try me again, I will study your interest, and never be guilty of a dishonest or improper thing."

"Henry, you know my feelings towards you, and have felt a deep interest in your welfare, and have always been true to you."

"I know it, and for this reason I feel so much the worse," said the boy, continuing to weep.

"If I should consent to have you remain in my store, you must turn over a new leaf to-day. I understand that you have been in the habit of late of visiting the miserable grog shops in the street and spending your evenings among the people who meet there to drink and carouse—and also that you have sometimes taken of the intoxicating cup. Is this true, Henry?"

"It is true, sir—I am sorry to say I was led away and over-persuaded to drink; but I will not do so again. I'm ashamed to think I have abused your kindness and have come to this. If you'll forgive me this once, I will give you no future trouble."

"You know, Henry, I feel for your situation, and would not hesitate to retain you, if I were sure that you would be faithful to me and keep away from bad associates."

"Just try me, sir, this once."

"Well, Henry, as you are sorry for the course that you have pursued, and seem resolved to become a good boy, you may continue with me, and I shall say nothing about this affair. Henry, I wish you would listen to my advice, and never go near a grog shop, or spend your evenings with a gang of unprincipled youth. Use

no profane words yourself, and discountenance their use in others. When you come with me, you were free from this charge, and I feel sorry that you ever associated with other than upright virtuous youth. Guard your heart and your lips—watch against temptation, and you will grow up an honest man, to be respected by all."

Henry thanked his master for his kindness, and resolved, as he attended to his duties, never to do any thing that would displease him.

When Charles had an opportunity of speaking to Henry, he remarked—How did you like the old man's blowing up?"

"I don't blame him. We have both been wrong."

"He said but little to me, and he'll forget all about it in a few days. Don't be so chop-fallen, Henry."

"Mr. Simonton has been kind to us, and it makes me feel unpleasant to know that he has had occasion to find fault. We must try to conduct better in future."

"Don't be frightened too soon. We've done nothing out of the way."

"We have not spent our evenings as we should, you know."

"What harm is there in enjoying ourselves? I shan't stay in the house for any body, after my work is done."

"I shall visit the shops in the street no more."

"The bigger fool you are."

"There is one thing we should look at, Charles. While we disobey Mr. Simonton, and visit improper places, we are injuring ourselves. Suppose we continue in the course we have pursued the last two months—what will be the consequence? If we accustom ourselves to smoking, drinking, and swearing, the habits will grow upon us, and we may become unprincipled men and common drunkards. We should look a little ahead."

"Enjoy ourselves while we can, I say. This is what I intend to do; but you are at liberty to become a deacon, if you please."

Henry did not like to prolong the conversation; but he was surprised and grieved at the language of his friend. He felt that he had erred, and was now resolved on a different course. In the evening, instead of going with Charles, he visited his parents; and when he retired to rest, he felt happier than as if he had been with unprincipled associates. It was late before his friend came home. He remarked to Henry—

"I have had a glorious time this evening. I never in my life enjoyed myself better."

"I am afraid you have not been in good company to-night?"

"If you were not a nippy, you might enjoy yourself, too. Henry, why don't you join the church?"

"To tell you the truth, Charles, I wish I was good enough to."

"Hah! hah! hah!—so I thought. Well, every one to his taste, I say."

Young Bedford continued to grow more unsteady, and stay out later at night. He was generally cross and disagreeable, and began to find fault with his companion. So different were the tastes and dispositions of the two boys, that they now associated together but very little, except in the way of business. Thus a few minutes passed away. The leisure time with Henry was passed in reading valuable books, and in various kinds of study, to improve his mind. Charles seldom took a book or a paper into his hands. Mr. Simonton was still kind to the boys, and seldom spoke a cross word to them. While in his shop, they attended to the business, and every thing seemed to go on prosperously. One day, as Henry was sitting at the dinner table, having been detained at the store later than usual—Sarah Simonton, his master's eldest daughter, a girl about eleven years old, came running into the room, and spoke to Henry—

"Pa has lost some money, and you have taken it."

"What is it?" anxiously inquired the boy.

"You have been taking some money from his drawer at the shop."

"That money the girl's mother came into the room and took her out, leaving Henry astonished beyond measure. He knew that he was innocent of the charge of theft, and without half eating his dinner he hastened to shop. Mr. Simonton being alone, Henry stated to him what his daughter had said.

"It is true, Henry, that I have lost several dollars of late, and it is unaccountable to me where it has gone. Last evening I called Charles to me, but could learn but very little from him. Have you seen Charles with money of late?"

"No, sir, I have not."

"Have you had any money?"

"The last I had were the three dollars you let me have a week ago last Saturday."

"Have you the bills now?"

"No, sir, I have but fifty cents in the world."

Upon this stating thus, Mr. Simonton took him into his counting room, with Charles, who had just entered the store. Being seated, Mr. S. inquired of Charles—

"Did you not tell me that Henry had some money?"

"Yes, sir—I thought I saw him put some bills in his trunk the other night."

"It is a mistake, Charles," said Henry; "I have had no money since the three dollars Mr. Simonton gave me a little while ago, and my mother bought me some things with the money."

"What made you think you saw him have money, Charles?"

"I saw him put something into his trunk, and I had no doubt it was money, but I may have been mistaken."

"Now tell the truth," said Mr. S., turning to Henry—"have you not money in your trunk?"

"Not but fifty cents, sir."

"Have you any objection to let me have your key, and look into your trunk?"

"Do you not believe me? I tell you the truth."

"Just loan me the key of your trunk."

"I have nothing in my trunk but what is my own; but the key could not keep from shedding tears."

But his reluctance to let him have the key, his master supposed he might be guilty, and insisted on having the key.

"Well, sir, you may take it; but you will find that I have not been dishonest nor deceived you."

Mr. Simonton took the key, and went directly to the house. He opened Henry's trunk, and, after looking a moment or two, stowed away in one corner, he found a one dollar bill. With more grief than anger, he locked the trunk, and took the bill with him to the shop.

Calling Henry into his room, he said—

"I am pained to the heart to find that you have deceived me."

"Deceived you I have not."

"Do not add lying to dishonesty, I beg of you. It will be worse for you in the end. It is better to acknowledge the whole."

"I have nothing to acknowledge," the boy wept aloud.

"I found this bill in your trunk," holding it in his hand.

"Then it was put there without my knowledge."

"Henry, I am sorry to hear you talk so. For the last few months, I have put the utmost confidence in you. You remember your promise to me, when I concluded to keep you, and say nothing about the former affair? but I must dismiss you now."

"Say not so—it will ruin me."

"I have tried you, after I found you not to be trustworthy, and this is my reward. I regret you have done this, but I cannot keep you longer. You may take your trunk from the house, and go home to your father."

With his handkerchief to his eyes, Henry left the store, and went directly to his mother. He told her the whole affair, amid sobs and tears.

"Never mind, my son," said she, "the really guilty person will be detected at last. It is hard to be accused of dishonesty, but it will be best not to say a word about it. Mr. Simonton is wealthy and we are poor, and if he were disposed, he could injure us a great deal; but he is deceived. By and by, when he knows who the really dishonest person, he will not hesitate to do justice by you. Dry your tears, and fit the present you can assist me about the house. Perhaps you can find a good opening in the course of a few weeks."

Mr. Jones exceedingly regretted what had happened when he came home to his dinner, but he whispered not a word of reproach against his son nor his master. Like a Christian philosopher, he remarked—

"Never mind, my boy, innocence will be vindicated in the end, while crime alone will be punished. Dwell not on the unhappy circumstance, but be happy at home, till you can obtain another place. It will turn out right in the end. Your motto always has been, 'Look on the right side.'"

When Henry took his trunk away from Mr. Simonton's, he went into the parlor to bid Mrs. S. and her daughter good bye, but they took no notice of him. A tear in his eye told how keenly he felt the slight.

"But I'll not mind it," said he, and he brushed the tear from his cheek.

In a few days he met Charles.

"What a fool you was," said he, "to leave that money in your trunk. You might have known the old man would find you out."

"I didn't put the money there, and you know it."

"I know it. Tell me that again if you dare."

Henry made no reply, and passed on.

It was not a long time before young Jones obtained another situation. He went into the store of a gentleman, who, liking his appearance, asked him if he did not wish for a place in his establishment. Henry was pleasantly situated with Mr. Roberts, and gave perfect satisfaction to his employer. He was attentive to his business, and took care to improve the spare moments of his time.

Henry had been in his new situation about four months, when he received a request from Mr. Simonton for him to call and see him at his house, on the following evening. Without hesitation, Henry called on his old master. When he was seated—Mr. Simonton and he

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